

## **Weston Commission for Children and Youth Minutes from the January 11, 2016 Meeting**

In attendance: Lynn Phillips, Jeff Drobner, Ellen Weyrauch, Cathy Minter, Alison Lisbon, Dru Walters, Shara Kolodney, Julianne Givoni, Chris Powers, Michelle Albright, Charlene Monn, Lindsey Kapel, Brendan Kirk, Danny Petty, Eliza Kleban

Meeting called to order at 5:51pm by Michelle Albright.

### Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved (Lynn first, Ellen second).

### Membership Updates

- Chris Spaulding has resigned from the Commission due to his appointment as Selectman. We are thankful for Chris' participation and wish him luck with his new position.
- Makenzie Daffner has resigned from the Commission because of conflicting school activities and scheduling.
- Members were introduced to our new student members Danny Petty, Brendan Kirk, and Eliza Kleban. Danny and Brendan are both juniors and also work for us on WOW programs at WIS. Eliza is a sophomore. We are thrilled to welcome you all!

### Chairperson Vote

- Lynn Phillips was nominated (Cathy first, Alison second) to continue to serve as Commission Chair and was unanimously approved by all members in attendance. Thank you Lynn for continuing to lead us!

### Program Updates

- Winter WOW programs begin this week including many new programs at both WIS and HES. Enrollment continues to be strong; only a French class at WIS had to be cancelled due to low enrollment.
- We are in the midst of planning our summer camps and will again be collaborating with Weston Public Schools to offer music, theater, and technology camps in addition to science, cooking, film, art, and legos.
- We are planning another Mini-Camp April 26<sup>th</sup> (a professional development day for teachers) given the success of our election day mini-camp. As before, this will be held at the senior center and will include some interactive activities for seniors and participating students.
- All Star Driver is changing their name to The Next Street at the end of February, however there will be change of ownership or management. Members discussed whether a new drivers education company (Green Light) might be drawing students away from us, as well as the pros and cons of the various programs. Although Green Light appears to offer more classes and some more flexibility, many students/parents prefer the convenience of our classes. Student members acknowledged that the classes can be large and somewhat boring, and that scheduling road time is often difficult. Charlene and Michelle will continue to monitor enrollment and explore how to improve our program.
- January's Tackling the Tough Stuff theme is Stress and Success (workshops are scheduled on 1/13 and 1/28). The first workshop is being presented in collaboration with Wilton Youth Services and Silver Hill Hospital and will be repeated in the morning and evening (once in Wilton and once in Weston).
- WYS received over \$1300 in cash donations and over \$4000 in gift cards from the Hurlbutt and WIS holiday Community Service drive. We are incredibly thankful for the generosity of students and families in our community.
- We are continuing to expand our partnership with the Weston library; Michelle met with Pamela Wilonski, the new children's librarian, to discuss how to coordinate programming and is also bringing her therapy dog Nellie for a Reading to Rover program once a month.
- Michelle has been meeting with WHS administrators and staff to plan additional initiatives to help students manage and relieve stress. Members discussed what contributes to students stress and anxiety and student

commissioners were particularly insightful and informative regarding the competitive culture of our community and parents' roles in exacerbating stress.

- Michelle and Charlene met with town administrators and the selectmen to submit our department budget and are optimistic that it will be approved without any changes. Michelle extended heartfelt thanks to Charlene for her support and assistance in preparing the budget.

#### Additional business

- Members discussed what kinds of activities and programs were most likely to engage children and their families (e.g., Family University, food trucks, social events vs educational events). Members discussed what worked (and what didn't) at Family U; members suggested that the rainy weather may have diminished attendance and commented that Joel Haber (the featured speaker) was not particularly dynamic and encountered audio-visual problems. Members agreed that it might be better to focus on social events that foster parent-child interaction and provide resources rather than a more formal educational focus.
- Members decided to cancel the February meeting, so the next meeting will be held on Monday March 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Albright